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P694 United States Department of Agriculture,

BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY,

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GRASS MIXTURE FOR MOIST MEADOWS.

The mixture here described is composed of redtop and alsike clover in the proportion of two of the former to one of the latter by weight. This mixture is exceedingly valuable for use on heavy wet soils and, in fact, clay soils of any character that are not well drained. On wet land generally it can be recommended in the tame grass region, as it gives better results than any other grass mixture that can be grown under such conditions.

The following is a brief description of the two plants:

Redtop.—This grass is also called herd's-grass in some parts of the South. It is a perennial grass with slender, smooth stems, 1 to 2 feet high, and creeping rootstocks. The seed is borne on an open head, which, when mature, is of a reddish brown color; hence the name "redtop." It is found to a greater or less extent in almost every State in the Union, but is of most importance in the general region including the States east of the Dakotas and Kansas and north of central Mississippi and Georgia. It is a very common grass in the mountain meadows of the Rocky Mountain States and can be grown successfully on low, wet soils in almost any part of this country. It is a hardy grass, enduring conditions of severe cold, and is also quite drought resistant. In many cases it can be used to advantage as a soil-binding grass.

Alsike clover.—Alsike clover is a perennial clover, in general intermediate in size and appearance between the common red clover and white clover. The leafy branches while not as coarse as those of red clover commonly reach the height of 18 inches and even more on moist rich soils. The blossoms resemble those of white clover more closely than those of red clover and are of a light pink color.

Alsike clover is a valuable honey-producing plant and is often grown for this purpose. It is widely distributed throughout the United States and its use is steadily increasing. On lands which refuse to grow red clover it is being grown with considerable success.

Value of the redtop-alsike clover mixture.—This mixture, as already stated, is especially valuable for its ability to produce profitable yields on heavy wet lands. It is of most importance for hay, although the aftergrowth will also furnish considerable pasturage. While redtop itself is not a very palatable grass when cut for hay, it makes in combination with alsike clover a hay that is usually relished by both horses and cattle.

Seeding.—This mixture can be seeded with good results in either the fall or the spring. Early fall seeding is thought to be better than spring seeding, as the grass is given a better chance to combat the weeds the first season. If sown in the fall it should be sown early, as alsike clover is likely to winterkill unless it makes a fairly good growth before the cold weather comes. Seeding 10 pounds of recleaned redtop to 5 pounds of alsike clover is considered the proper rate. The seed can be mixed before seeding and sown broadcast or with any kind of grass seeder. If sown early in the fall the best results will be obtained without the use of a nurse crop.

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